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SUBJECT: BOSNIAN SECURITY AGENCY HEADS PLEDGE COOPERATION

Classified By: DCM Judith B. Cefkin. Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) DCM, September 10, hosted heads of security and law enforcement agencies to lunch to discuss maximizing interagency cooperation. Agency heads stressed their commitment to interagency cooperation but complained that political leaders make effective police and intelligence work difficult. Several agency heads openly criticized Minister of Security Tarik Sadovic for obstructing effective law enforcement and undermining intelligence assessments. Agency directors expressed awareness of the threat posed by the presence in Bosnia of former foreign fighters such as Abu Hamza and worried that the required legislation to carry out effective deportations is not in place. The entity police directors steered clear of any discussion of police reform simply stating that they will implement the decisions of political leaders. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On September 10 the DCM hosted directors of Bosnian law enforcement and security agencies at a lunch meeting to discuss interagency and bilateral cooperation. Present at the meeting were State Border Police (SBP) Director Vinko Dumancic, Intelligence and Security Agency (OSA) Director Almir Dzuvo, Foreigners Affairs Service (FAS) Director Dragan Mektic, Assistant Minister of Security Vjekoslav Vukovic, Federation Police Director Zlatko Miletic and Republika Srpska Police Director Uros Pena. Although invited, Sead Lisak, Acting Director of the State Investigation and Protection Agency, was unable to attend.

OSA Director Dzuvo

¶3. (C) OSA Director Almir Dzuvo opened the discussion by stating that the difficult political environment in Bosnia is undermining cooperation and effective law enforcement among security agencies. He noted that the chronic lack of trust among Bosnian politicians has infected relations among the security agencies they direct. Dzuvo cited the example of Minister of Security Tarik Sadovic who, after OSA had recently commented on the threat posed by foreign extremists in Bosnia, publicly criticized the agency and disputed its findings. Dzuvo said it was outrageous that a cabinet Minister would publicly undermine his government's intelligence agency. He was pessimistic in his assessment of the ability of law enforcement agencies to operate free from political interference. Dzuvo also warned that Bosnian security agencies are not taking a long-term strategic approach to analyzing security threats. Rather, the government, and the Ministry of Security in particular, approach the topic on an ad hoc basis.

State Border Police and Foreigners Affairs Service

¶ 14. (C) SBP Director Vinko Dumancic emphasized that U.S. assistance has been critical in the development of his agency and requested continued material and financial support. He noted that he was personally committed to active interagency cooperation among his counterparts and would use as a model the interagency cooperation he had witnessed during a recent ATA-sponsored visit to the United States.

¶ 15. (C) Dragan Mektic noted that the Foreigners Affairs Service is very aware of the threat posed by certain aliens present in Bosnia such as Abu Hamza. Mektic noted that in his recent public comments Abu Hamza has directly threatened national security. However, FAS is struggling with a weak legislative foundation and operational shortfalls. He lamented that, at present, FAS cannot adequately address these challenges. Mektic noted that the draft amendments to the Law on Movement and Stay of Aliens are badly needed and, if passed, will ameliorate a number of these difficulties.

Vukovic on the CRC

¶ 16. (C) Assistant Minister of Security Vukovic said that as Chair of the Citizenship Review Commission he has presided over the revocation of 616 citizenships of individuals who could potentially pose a terrorism threat to Bosnia. He hoped that the actions of his panel will be followed up by concrete enforcement by the security agencies. Implicitly criticizing his own Minister Tarik Sadovic, Vukovic said that "hesitation by certain individuals" is complicating the likelihood that this enforcement will take place soon.

¶ 17. (C) Vukovic noted that he had recently met with OHR representatives to finalize amendments to the Criminal Code imposing criminal penalties for public statements advocating or supporting terrorism, such as Abu Hamza's recent comments to the press. After legal review by OHR the amendments will be conveyed to the Council of Ministers for review and approval.

Entity Police Directors

¶ 18. (C) Federation Police Director Zlatko Miletic stated that he feared that the country's law enforcement agencies have failed the citizens of Bosnia. In particular, progress on apprehending war criminals and combating organized crime in particular has been slow. Police reform, in whatever form politicians finally agree on, will both address these shortcomings and facilitate Bosnia's path to Europe, Miletic said. Law enforcement agencies can easily implement whatever politicians decide and it is up to the country's leaders to provide direction to the police forces.

¶ 19. (C) RS Police Director Uros Pena said he agreed with Miletic on developments at the national level. However, he emphasized that entity police agencies are doing a good job at maintaining security on a day to day basis noting that both the RS and Federation police have very high rates of solved crimes, higher than in many European countries. Pena acknowledged that while the threat of terrorism is real, certain political figures exaggerate the threat level for political purposes giving the impression that there are "terrorists around every corner." The security situation in Bosnia, on the contrary, is very good.

¶ 10. (C) Turning to police reform, Pena said he was angry that the international community had focused on the state level law enforcement at the expense of entity agencies. While he acknowledged a role for state level agencies, they are only as strong as local police agencies.

¶ 11. (C) Pena noted that entity police forces bear the brunt of manipulations by political leaders. He cited the example of the directive to suspend and investigate 50 RS police

officers for involvement with war crimes. While appropriate, the timing of the High Representative's directive on the heels of the July 11 Srebrenica commemoration, had been engineered by party leaders for political purposes, Pena asserted. The timing of the decision at such a sensitive time could have caused public unrest and constituted a serious security risk, Pena said.

Comment

¶12. (C) Given the distrust and manipulation with which Bosnian political leaders approach their security architecture it is rare for agency heads to meet together in a group. Agency heads were clearly appreciative of the opportunity and seemed to appreciate the message that interagency coordination is essential to combating terrorism and crime. Each agency head expressed their commitment to close interagency and interjurisdictional cooperation. We hope this discussion will stimulate additional efforts to break down law enforcement stovepipes here. End Comment.
MCELHANEY